



America's Commitment The United Nations Women's Conference Women 2000 • Beijing Plus Five The President's Interagency Council on Women

Highlights from Women 2000: Beijing Plus Five June 2000 UN Meeting

President Clinton established the President's Interagency Council on Women in August 1995, on the eve of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, in order to "make sure that all the effort and good ideas actually get implemented when we get back home."

Since the 1995 mandate, the President's Council has coordinated implementation of the *Platform for Action* at the federal level, and worked with individual agencies to develop cross-cutting initiatives to further women's progress. The Council engages in outreach and public education that supports the goals of the *Platform for Action*—goals that improve the status and well-being of women and their families, both domestically and internationally.

Beijing Plus Five was a Special Session of the UN General Assembly to review the implementation of the Beijing *Platform for Action*. More than 180 countries took part in this important review.

Preparation in the United States for Women 2000

In preparation for Beijing Plus Five, the President's Council reviewed the progress our government has made to improve the lives of women and their families.

Regional events were organized by the President's Council in partnership with diverse non-governmental organizations, high schools, universities, and regional community organizations. Thirteen outreach events were coordinated across the United States, to provide an opportunity to share best practices, achievements and lessons learned since the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Reports generated from the events were submitted by the President's Council to the U.S. Delegation to the UN General Assembly Special Session in June 2000.

U.S. Regional Events took place at:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| • Kansas City, Missouri | Oct 13, 1999 |
| • Wilmington, Delaware | Nov 6, 1999 |
| • Manchester, New Hampshire | Nov 6, 1999 |
| • Dallas, Texas | Nov 6-7, 1999 |
| • Chicago, Illinois | Dec 6, 1999 |
| • Boston, Massachusetts | Feb 5, 2000 |
| • Seattle, Washington | Feb 11-12, 2000 |
| • Denver, Colorado | Feb 12, 2000 |
| • San Francisco, California | Feb 25-26, 2000 |
| • Charlotte, North Carolina | Feb 26, 2000 |
| • Atlanta, Georgia | Mar 4, 2000 |
| • Baton Rouge, Louisiana | Mar 31, 2000 |
| • Oakland, California | Apr 15, 2000 |



Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright** congratulates **Angelena Alexander**, now a State Department employee, at the March 30th event, Celebrating America's Commitment to Women. Ms. Alexander shared her personal welfare to work success.

Celebrating America's Commitment to Women

On March 30th the coordinators of the 13 regional events met at the State Department for a culminating event, *Celebrating America's Commitment to Women*. Secretary Albright emphasized the tremendous accomplishments made since the 1995 Beijing Conference. Personal success stories of three women were also highlighted: Angelena Alexander of Washington DC spoke about her personal journey from welfare to work. Carol Deckert of Lancaster, Pennsylvania shared her success as a small business owner. Tatjana Stoljarova, a young factory plant manager from Estonia, spoke about the important work of the *Vital Voices Global Democracy Initiative* and its positive impact on women's lives in other countries.

The President's Council formally introduced the 2000 edition of *America's Commitment*, a comprehensive five-year review of U.S. government programs, policies, and initiatives that promote the advancement of women. The report measures U.S. government efforts against the goals of the *UN Platform for Action*, the final consensus document adopted by 189 nations at the UN Women's Conference. The *Platform* is the strongest statement of women's empowerment ever made by the international community.

Download a copy of *America's Commitment* from the Council website: http://secretary.state.gov/www/picw/beijing/events_map.html or call 202-647-6227 to receive a copy my mail.

Activities at the UN Special Session

A **Beijing Plus Five Host Committee**, including 40 NGOs and foundations, formed one year prior to the conference and worked in partnership with the U.S. Government, the private sector, and with the UN NGO Committee. The Beijing Plus Five Host Committee Co-Chairs were: **Ellen Chesler**, Open Society Institute; **Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly**, College of New Rochelle and U.S. Delegation to Beijing; **Barbara Arnwine**, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law; and **Kavita Ramdas**, Global Fund for Women. An estimated 8,000 NGOs representing women worldwide congregated in New York to participate in Beijing Plus Five events.

The U.S. Delegation was chaired by **Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright**, and co-chaired by **Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala** and **Ambassador Richard Holbrooke**, U.S. Representative to the United Nations. **Ambassador Linda Tarr-Whelan**, U.S. Representative to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and **Ambassador Betty King**, U.S. Representative on the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), served as deputy chairs. **Theresa Loar**, Director of the President's Interagency Council on Women, was the Director of the U.S. Delegation. Three members of Congress served as Congressional Advisers: **Senator Barbara Lee (D-CA)**, **Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)**, and **Representative Joseph Crowley (D-NY)**. The public members of the U.S. Delegation were: **Caryl Garcia**, Association for Women in Development; **Kate Washburn**, Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) for Human Rights; **Jane Smith**, National Council for Negro Women; and **Ritu Sharma**, Women's EDGE, The Coalition for Women's Economic Development and Global Equality.

The President's Council worked with the General Services Administration to provide a gathering place for NGOs from around the world – the U.S. Custom House. High-level, substantive meetings took place at the U.S. Custom House, the Church Center and other New York locations during the Special Session, and were sponsored primarily by NGOs.

Other members of the U.S. Delegation included:

Katherine Blakeslee, Director, Office of Women in Development, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); **Katherine Gorove**, Office of the Legal Advisor, State Department; **Judith Heumann**, Assistant Secretary, Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education; **Kathleen Hendrix**, Advisor to the President's Interagency Council on Women; **Sharon Kotok**, Officer in Charge of International Women's Programs, International Organization Affairs Bureau, State Department; **Sarah Kovner**, Special Assistant to the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; **Geri Palast**, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Labor; **Margaret Pollack**, Director of the Office of Population, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, State Department; **Avraham Rabby**, Social Affairs Officer, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, **Lidia Soto-Harmon**, Deputy Director, President's Interagency Council on Women, **Barbara Turner**, Acting Assistant Administrator, Women in Development, USAID.

- **First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton** spoke at the United Nations, at a forum on microcredit hosted by the UNIFEM Development Fund for Women.
- **Secretary of State Madeleine Albright** addressed the General Assembly on behalf of the United States.
- **Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala** spoke at and moderated an all-day event, "Focus on Women's Health Around the World," at Hunter College.
- **Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and Ambassador Linda Tarr-Whelan** spoke at the Women 2000 Economic Empowerment Forum held at the U.S. Custom House.
- **Ambassador Richard Holbrooke** addressed the panel, "Women Crossing the Digital Divide Into the Future," held at the U.S. Custom House.
- **Theresa Loar** addressed "Political Dimensions of Globalization" at an event sponsored by the **National Council for Research on Women**; a discussion of "Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership" organized by the **International Foundation for Election Systems and the United Nations**; and "Women in Government – Making a Difference" sponsored by the **National League of Cities, Women in Municipal Government**, and the **International Union of Local Authorities**.
- **Anita Botti, Chair of the Interagency Working Group on Trafficking**, participated in two panels on trafficking: the Government of the Philippines sponsored a follow-up discussion to the March trafficking workshop involving Asia-Pacific countries; and a UNICEF sponsored panel which focused on trafficking worldwide, particularly children and young adults.
- **The U.S. Government** also held daily public briefings for the NGO community, and rooms were filled to capacity. **Secretary Shalala** chaired the June 6th NGO briefing.
- **Members of the President's Interagency Council on Women** led a discussion on the work of the Council.



Marilyn Fowler, State Coordinator of California Women's Agenda (WIN/CAWA) presents Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with a pin representing women shattering the glass ceiling. From left to right: Judy Hickey, Massachusetts Action for Women, The Honorable Jackie Weatherspoon, New Hampshire State Representative, Lidia Soto-Harmon, Deputy Director of The President's Interagency Council for Women (PICW) and Theresa Loar, Director of PICW.

Notable Quotes from Beijing Plus Five

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton Honorary Chair, President's Interagency Council on Women

"Many of us have spent our lifetimes fighting for these rights. That is the mission that brought thousands of us to Beijing, and bring us now to New York to celebrate the progress we have made in the last five years, and recommit ourselves to finishing the work of achieving women's equality.

We have come to the UN, not only because we believe that all women and girls should be treated with dignity and respect, but also because we know no country today will ever get ahead if half of its citizens are left behind."

June 5, 2000, at a forum on microcredit, sponsored by the UNIFEM Development Fund For Women, United Nations

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright Chair, President's Interagency Council on Women

"Our movement is not about making each woman the same. It is about recognizing and appreciating women's diversity, and about treating each individual fairly. This principle is the magnet that has brought us together across the boundaries of ethnicity and vocation, generation and power."

June 8, 2000, UN General Assembly

Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Immediate Past Chair, President's Interagency Council on Women

"Sisterhood is still powerful. International sisterhood is even more powerful. But international sisterhood that takes our health into our own hands is unstoppable. That's what prevention is all about. That's what the UN conference is all about. And that's why we're here today."

June 7, 2000, Focus on Women's Health Around the World, Hunter College



First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala during a President's Interagency Council on Women meeting at the Department of State.

Secretary of Treasury Lawrence Summers

"Letting girls go to school, learn to read, and experience more of the world beyond their homes makes them better off immediately and enriches their families. The result, in country after country, is smaller, healthier families enjoying longer happier lives. The cost of keeping girls in school just one more year more than pays for themselves in the social and economic benefits, in the form of higher incomes, and smaller numbers of infant and maternal deaths."

June 6, 2000, Women 2000 Economic Empowerment Forum, U.S. Custom House

Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke United States Representative to the United Nations and Co-Chair, U.S. Delegation to Beijing Plus Five

"What we hope to do here this week is to work on eliminating these disparities, or at least reducing them. This will be impossible as long as such a disproportionate number of women remain on the other side of the digital divide. No country, not even the United States, is immune from this. "

June 7, 2000, Women Crossing the Digital Divide into the Future, U.S. Custom House



Members of the President's Interagency Council on Women

Back Row From Left to Right: **Ellen Lazar**, Treasury; **Jennifer Luray**, White House Women's Office; **Sylvia Baca**, Interior; **Scott Busby**, National Security Council; **Virginia Canter**, National Endowment for the Humanities; **Constance Dunham**, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency; **Nancy Hendry**, Peace Corps; **Carolyn Becraft**, Navy; **Bonnie Campbell**, Justice; **Anita Botti**, State; **Jan Piercy**, World Bank; **Ambassador Sally Shelton-Colby**, U.S. Agency for International Development; **Ambassador Betty King**, U.S. Mission to the United Nations; **Dr. Nancy Valentine**, Veterans Affairs; **Joyce Kravitz**, United States Information Agency; **Ambassador Craig Johnstone**, State; **Jill Long Thompson**, Agriculture; **Lidia Soto-Harmon**, State; **Elaine Shocas**, State; **Frankee Greenberg**, Environmental Protection Agency; **Dr. Susan F. Wood**, Health and Human Services.

Seated from Left to Right: **Sarah Kovner**, Health and Human Services; **General Claudia Kennedy**, Army; **Secretary Madeleine K. Albright**, State; **First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton**; **Secretary Donna Shalala**, Health and Human Services; **Melanne Verveer**, The White House; **Deputy Secretary Kitty Higgins**, Labor; **Theresa Loar**, State.

International Preparations for Beijing Plus Five

Just like the United States prepared for Women 2000, countries around the world also developed ways of measuring their countries' progress for women. The United Nations held five regional preparatory meetings prior to a March 2000 Preparatory meeting at the United Nations to help develop the outcome document. The five meetings were held by the United Nations Economic and Social Commissions around the world, and each developed a regional document.

Meetings took place around the world as follows:

- **October 26 – 29, 1999 - Bangkok, Thailand:** UN Regional PrepCom for ESCAP [Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific]
- **November 22 – 27, 1999 - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia:** UN Regional PrepCom for ECA [Economic Commission for Africa]
- **December 15 – 18, 1999 - Beirut, Lebanon:** UN Regional PrepCom for ESCWA [Economic and Social Commission for West Asia]
- **January 19 – 21, 2000 - Geneva, Switzerland:** UN Regional PrepCom for ECE [Economic Commission for Europe]
- **February 8-10, 2000 - Lima, Peru:** UN Regional PrepCom for ECLAC [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean].

The United States sent delegations to the meetings in Bangkok, Addis Ababa, Geneva and Lima. U.S. embassies around the world worked with other governments and NGOs to build support for the Women 2000 agenda.

The Beijing Plus Five Outcome Document

During the March 2000 Commission on the Status of Women's (CSW) meeting at the United Nations, work began on a final text for the Special Session, called the outcome document. Intersessional meetings continued in April and

May to further develop an outcome document that all member-states adopted by consensus during the UN General Assembly Special Session in June. Along with the final outcome document, a political declaration reaffirming the member-state's commitment to the *Platform for Action* was also drafted and adopted. The Division for the Advancement of Women at the United Nations served as the secretariat for the Special Session, and issued a Secretary General's report from information collected from national surveys. The United States response to the UN questionnaire is found on the Council's website.

Along with these documents, the Commission on the Status of Women addressed the critical areas of concern outlined in the *Platform for Action* at each of its annual meetings since 1996. These agreed conclusions also served as an important input for the final outcome document. The final outcome document from the UN General Assembly Special Session Women 2000: Beijing Plus Five was completed June 10, 2000.

The final outcome document reaffirms the 12 areas of the *Platform for Action*, including measures to:

- identify violence against women as a human rights violation;
- address the issue of honor killings;
- monitor trafficking of women and condemn exploitation of women and girls for economic and sexual purposes;
- respond to the impact of HIV / AIDS on the health of women and girls internationally, particularly in Africa;
- expand entrepreneurship and credit availability, including microcredit;
- emphasize "gender mainstreaming" (a gender perspective) in all economic policies, institutions and resource allocation;
- promote women's role in conflict resolution and peace-building, and the role of men in promoting gender equality.

The outcome document reaffirmed the human rights of women and the commitment of the international community to implement the Beijing *Platform for Action*.

Beijing Plus Five additional websites:

Beijing Plus Five:

www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/beijing5/index.html

UN Commission on the Status of Women:

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/

UN Internet Gateway on the Advancement and Empowerment of Women:

www.un.org/womenwatch

UN Division for the Advancement of Women:

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw

US Women Connect: <http://www.uswc.org>

Other Links:

Women's Research on the Internet:

www.win-cawa.org/cawa/cawaur.html

Online Directory of Women's Organizations:

www.electrapages.com

Communications Consortium Media Center:

www.ccmc.org

The President's Interagency Council on Women

Theresa Loar, *Director*

Lidia Soto-Harmon, *Deputy Director*

Anita Botti, *Deputy Director and Chair*, Interagency Working Group on Trafficking

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